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Initials/Date Docketed: 11-8-50

Type of Resp(s):

Due Date(s):



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In re Application of
Vierira, et al.
Application No. 09/908,888
Filed: July 20, 2001
For: Fabrication Of A Wavelength
Locker Within A Semiconductor
Structure
Attorney Docket No. 211692US99

: RESPONSE TO PETITION
: UNDER 37 CFR 1.182
: SEEKING SPECIAL
: TREATMENT OF DISCLOSURE
: STATEMENTS, AND
: DECISION ON PETITION
: UNDER 37 CFR 1.183
: SEEKING WAIVER OF
: REQUIREMENTS UNDER
: 37 CFR 1.98

This is a response to a petition under 37 CFR 1.182 filed on April 12, 2002 and supplements filed on July 1, 2002 and on July 12, 2002. The § 1.182 petition requests special treatment of disclosure statements filed pursuant to 37 CFR 1.98. Additionally, the petition requests waiver of the rules which waiver is treated as a request under 37 CFR 1.183, for relief from the current requirements for Information Disclosure Statements under 37 CFR 1.98. The request for special treatment and waiver are made in view of the need to file multiple applications relating to different aspects of a particular invention. The § 1.182 petition also contains a request seeking permission to submit prior art submissions on compact disc and the establishment and searching of an Official classification(s) based on the prior art submission. The petition under 37 CFR 1.183, is requesting relief from the § 1.98 provision which requires filing paper copies of references in each of many related applications where the references are being cited by Petitioner.

The petition under 37 CFR 1.182 requesting special treatment of disclosure statements, and the petition under 37 CFR 1.183 regarding the submission of a reduced number of paper copies of IDS references is GRANTED IN PART to the extent set forth below.

The Decision is set forth in five parts:

- Part I. Background
- Part II. Petition Under 37 CFR 1.182 - Special Treatment
- Part III. Petition Under 37 CFR 1.183 - Paper Copies
- Part IV. Summary
- Part V. Further Correspondence

Part I. Background

The instant application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111 is one of about 330 U.S. applications (either filed or to be filed) relating to

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different aspects of an invention listed in the July 1, 2002 supplement to the petition. An appendix prepared by Technology Center 2800 indicates approximately 300 of the applications have been classified for examination in Technology Center 2800. The balance of about 30 applications are in five other Technology Centers. The July 12, 2002 supplement to the petition indicates that an Information Disclosure Citation List has in excess of 400 reference citations.

Petitioner's submission of an Information Disclosure Statement is taken as an attempt to comply with 37 CFR 1.56(b)(1) that requires disclosure to the Office of information that "establishes, by itself or in combination with other information, a prima facie case of unpatentability of a claim...." Such disclosure can be made by an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) in the manner prescribed by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.

Part II. Petition Under 37 CFR 1.182 - Special Treatment

The petition requests the establishment of an Official search classification containing all of the references cited in the IDS and that the examiners be required to search that classification.

As is the case with all search Digests, their creation and usefulness is continually evaluated. The Office will create and place appropriate references in Digests as they are discovered. The Office will not commit to placement of each IDS citation, made in all of the bulk filing applications, in any Digest(s) as the particular relevancy of the citations at this time is uncertain because petitioner has supplied no explanation of any of the citations. The Office will not require that any digest(s) created be searched for each of the bulk filing applications as the appropriate search for any particular application is within the determination and discretion of individual examiner based on the claim(s) of that application.

The petition also mentions the submission of additional copies of the references on compact disc for the examiner's convenience which appear to be courtesy copies. Courtesy copies will not be made part of the Official record of any application and cannot be relied upon for meeting any requirement for the submission of an information disclosure statement. There is insufficient information in the petition concerning the data formats and software requirements to accord the compact discs any other status. Further, as discussed below, the Office has a procedure for electronically submitting citations without paper copies for an Information Disclosure Statement. Hence it is not clear why relief is required under § 1.182. In view of the relief granted below, and that no specific action is requested concerning the compact disc submission, no further discussion of the compact discs is required in this decision.

Petition under § 1.182 is Dismissed.

Part III. Petition Under 37 CFR 1.183 - Paper Copies

37 CFR 1.98 requires that any information disclosure statement provide a copy of all patents, publications or other information submitted under 37 CFR 1.97 for consideration by the Office. 37 CFR 1.97 notes that information disclosure statements are considered in regard to the application in which they are filed. See also MPEP 609, pages 600-118 and 600-119.

Paper copies: Petitioner notes that the instant application is one of about 330 bulk filing applications that will be or have been filed in regard to a particular technology. Accordingly, Petitioner requests that individual paper copies of each citation brought to the attention of the Office in regard to the instant individual application, the "holding" application, not be required to be submitted in each related "bulk filing" application. Rather, it is requested that three complete sets of paper copies be permitted to be filed as a substitute for filing in each application.

Rather than be required to submit, via a paper copy, 400 reference in each of 330 applications, Petitioner seeks to have:

(1) Three complete sets of paper copies of each IDS citation submitted;

(2) One application (the instant application) identified as a "holding" application which would contain one complete set of paper copies of references; the paper copies of U.S. patents to be submitted in only the "holding" application;

(3) The other related pending U.S. applications, hereafter referred to as the "bulk filing" applications, be exempt from containing a paper set of the references; the bulk filing applications will contain other information, e.g., a copy of the decision on petition permitting such procedure, a copy of the Form 1449 (or equivalent). The petition does not indicate whether the paper references that are to be submitted as a numbered compendium, which numbering will correspond to the numbering in a PTO-1449 form.

(4) The information supplied via the bulk filing IDS will be updated approximately monthly.

Once past the initial IDS submission, the petition proposes the waiver to apply to updates.

Suspension of action: In view of the use of the instant application as a holding application (to contain a complete set of paper copies of reference citations, which can be consulted by the examiner when examining any of the other bulk filing applications that have a Form 1449 but not the paper copies of the references), the petition does not address how upon allowance the instant holding application will be treated. Whether the application can remain as the holding application without a suspension of action is not addressed. An alternative not discussed in the petition is that an alternate application may be designated as the holding application.

Termination: Petitioner does not seek a specific right of termination. Termination by the Office is to be by written notice to the attorney giving a 2 month period. Termination by Petitioner is to be by returning to compliance with 37 CFR § 1.98. The Office will accept and specifically reserve the right to terminate the waiver grant in regard to § 1.98(a)(2) without provision of reasons. Should a termination of the waiver be desired by the Office, the Office will provide written notice to the correspondence address of record. In such event, a two month period will be given where paper copies would have to be supplied in all applications where new citations are made. Termination by Applicant may be by returning to compliance with § 1.98(a)(2) without formal notice thereof and no transition/continuing period after termination is required.

Different Technology Centers: It appears from the petition that Petitioner intends to cite every reference cited in any of the 330 applications in every other application. No references will be omitted because they are less relevant or cumulative of those already of record in a particular application. At least 30 of the applications are of such divergent technologies that they are in 5 technology centers outside Technology Center 2800. The applications outside Technology Center 2800 will be examined in areas without convenient access to the paper copies in Technology Center 2800. The 5 other technology centers have requested more access to the paper copies than the relief granting this petition for all 330 applications will afford. It is not clear from the petition why citing every reference in every application when they are in such diverse technologies is necessary or required by § 1.56. Relieving petitioner of the burden of filing paper copies in applications outside Technology Center 2800 will create an additional burden on the examiners of those applications. It is also possible for applicant to comply with 37 CFR 1.98 for U.S. Patents and Patent application publications by submitting references via "e-IDS."¹ Hence it appears that petitioner has not demonstrated why a waiver for those applications filed outside Technology Center 2800 is necessary.

Decision: 37 CFR 1.183 provides relief for extraordinary situations, when justice requires suspension of any requirement of the regulations which is not a requirement of the statutes. The instant petition urges that not only would applicant be spared the necessity of submitting duplicative paper copies of U.S. patents in over 300 applications, but also the Office would benefit from not having to handle and store the duplicative sets of copies. While there may be some negative effects from the Office's point of view in terms of making the copies available to different examiners handling the various applications, on balance, there is seen to be sufficient benefit to justify waiver in this instance for the applications filed in Technology Center 2800. With respect to those applications being examined outside

¹The instructions for submitting an e-IDS can be downloaded at:
http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/efs/downloads/documents/EFSePAVE_April23.pdf.

Technology Center 2800, on balance, the burden on petitioner is substantially less to provide an additional paper copy for each application with significantly less benefit to the Office waiving the requirement. Further with respect to other 30 applications the need to submit these references has not been established nor has petitioner addressed alternative methods of compliance.

Accordingly, the petition under 37 CFR 1.183 is granted to the extent indicated and under the terms and conditions as are set forth below.

The § 1.98(a)(2) requirement for (the submission of) a copy of each IDS citation in a bulk filing application will be waived in the bulk filing applications examined in Technology Center 2800 provided that the following 9 conditions are complied with:

- 1) Three paper copies of each IDS citation are or have been submitted to the Office;
- 2) Each (bulk filing) application for which waiver of § 1.98(a)(2) is desired refers to the instant holding application, such as by a claim of priority under 35 U.S.C. 120, or as containing related technology;
- 3) The information is or has also been cited in the holding application;

Note: Applicant is not required to cite in each bulk filing application every item of information that is cited in the instant holding application. Items should be cited in each bulk filing application on the basis of relevancy and materiality to the particular claims in the bulk filing application and what each piece of information teaches.

A waiver is not granted (for the requirement to supply a paper copy of an IDS citation in another bulk filing application) where the citation is not, or has not been, made in the instant holding application.

- 4) A copy of this Decision is filed in each bulk filing application for which waiver is requested;

5) Explanatory information related to a particular citation, such as the concise explanation of a foreign language reference under § 1.98(a)(2), once submitted in the holding application must be supplied in each bulk filing application where the citation is made.

6) The Office accepts and specifically reserves the right to terminate the waiver grant in regard to § 1.98(a)(2) without provision of reasons. In such event, a two month period will be given where paper copies would have to be supplied in all applications where new citations are made. Should a termination of the waiver be desired by the Office, the Office will provide written notice to the correspondence address of record. Termination by applicant may be by returning to compliance with § 1.98(a)(2) without formal notice thereof and no transition/continuing period after termination is required.

- 7) The grant of the § 1.183 petition re § 1.98(a)(2) does

not indicate that the Office would favorably treat a petition to suspend action under § 1.103(a) should the instant holding application be allowed. Issuance of the instant application as a patent is not seen to terminate its usefulness either: (1) as a holding application for references by examiners working on other related applications, or (2) as a vehicle for the storage of references to be cited even after the patent issues (35 U.S.C. 301, 37 CFR 1.501, and MPEP 2202). Should the instant application become abandoned, the issue of continued introduction of paper copies of new citations could be taken up at that time. The Office, however, may consider suspending or taking other appropriate action in the instant holding application in the event the holding application is allowed, if it is in the best interest of the Office to do so.

8) There will be no waiver of any aspects of 37 CFR 1.98 in any application after allowance or final rejection of that application.

9) The copies will be submitted as a compendium with the reference numbering in the Form 1449 corresponding to the presentation of the references in the compendium.

Part IV. Summary

The petition under 37 CFR 1.182 requesting special treatment by creation of special digests and accepting compact disc submissions is dismissed because there is no showing that the relief granted below under 37 CFR 1.183 is not sufficient for compliance with 37 CFR 1.56.

The petition under 37 CFR 1.183 agreeing to supply three copies of each IDS citation in a holding application and requesting waiver of the paper copy requirement for submission in every related application under § 1.98(a)(2) is granted for those applications examined in Technology Center 2800, however, the following is not agreed to:

- the waiver of supplying a paper copy of each reference in applications examined outside Technology Center 2800.
- the creation of Official search classifications and the mandatory search thereof.
- The establishment of an Official search classification containing all of the references cited in the IDS and that the examiners be required to search that classification.

Part V. Further Correspondence

Any correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box DAC
Washington, D.C. 20231

TC Assignment Appendix
Bulk Filing List With TC Assignment

Docket Number	Application #	Art Unit
	10125540	1631
	9984471	1641
	9624877	1725
	9911539	1725
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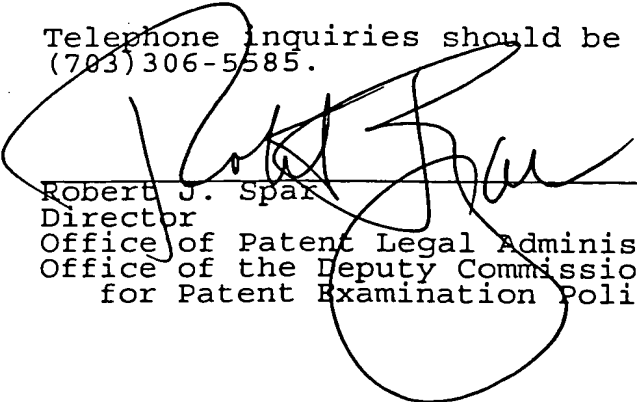
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Attachment: TC Assignment Appendix